
Timothy Zahn

Survivor's Quest (Star Wars Universe)



Title: Survivor's Quest (Star Wars Universe)

Author: Timothy Zahn

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Description

Luke Skywalker and his wife, Mara, get a strange message from the Chiss: Come and get the remains of the mysterious Outbound Flight Project. But there is more than meets the eye to this unexpected gift, as the newlyweds come face to face with the past! For someone is still alive in the Outbound Flight ships, and they're not interested in visitors. Plus there's at least one imposter along on the mission, and maybe more, and it will be up to Luke and Mara to uncover all the secrets and prevent another war from breaking out.

Insightful reviews

Jessica Petree: Zahn is amazing! And I love all his books that relate to Thrawn and Outbound Flight, especially. In this novel, they examine the wreck and find much they never expected...

Timothy Stone: *Survivor's Quest*, by Timothy Zahn, is part of the former Expanded Universe of *Star Wars* stories, now rendered as the alternate continuity by the Lucasfilm/Disney story folks. Written by Zahn, it is, of course, high quality.

It is also a tad unique in that it is much more action-packed than the other books. Yes, there is the "realism" of other Zahn titles, combined with the aspect of trying to figure out a mystery, but the main action takes up about a third of the book in a series of battles.

The basic story is that Jedi Masters Luke and Mara Jade Skywalker (Luke's wife) are summoned by the Chiss, via the Empire of the Hand. The Chiss Ascendancy, the people of Grand Admiral Thrawn, have discovered the remains of the Outbound Flight (which readers know from earlier books that Thrawn destroyed), and wish to hand them over to the Republic and the Jedi.

On the way, they meet aliens who wish to thank the Jedi of Outbound Flight for what they did saving their people from the slavers the Vagaari. But all is not as it seems, and if Luke, Mara, and others, including a man posing as an ambassador for personal reasons and Baron Fel's son leading a squad of the 501st Stormtroopers from the Empire of the Hand, can not figure out the truth, many lives will be lost.

The favorite part for me was seeing both the Chiss, who are awesome, and Luke and Mara's marriage. The Chiss are fascinating, and to see ones that are not anti-villains, but more heroic, was really cool. I loved also the closeness that Luke and Mara had. Seeing their marriage was nice because you see they love each other. I so hope they have Mara adapted into the main universe in Episode 7. I'd love to see her as Luke's wife there too. :D

Another part of the book I liked I can't describe well, as I'd give away major spoilers. Let's just say that Zahn gives us an emotionally and intellectually satisfying tale and leave it there.

Only thing I disliked was wincing at how Thrawn was given an in-universe historical hero upgrade among the characters. He wasn't as evil as other villains, but was still a bad guy.

All in all though, a great book that I Highly Recommend.

Katrin von Martin: Going into this review, I have to be honest: I'd put reading this book off for quite a while due to the fact that it had several things stacked against it and just generally didn't sound interesting to me as far as Star Wars books go. I ended up enjoying it slightly more than I expected, but it also had all of the problems I foresaw it having. Spoilers follow.

"Survivor's Quest" takes place three years after Luke and Mara are married. The couple receives a previously intercepted message informing them to come to a specific place in Chiss-controlled space by a certain date. They do so, and are told by the Chiss that the remains of the Outbound Flight have been discovered, and since members from the Old Republic and Jedi Order perished in the crash, the Chiss decided that Luke and Mara should have the opportunity to see the wreckage.

The Jedi couple are immediately put on edge when introduced to the other members of the party. The various Chiss participants (Aristocra Formbi, Drask, and Feesa), the Imperial Remnant (Chak Fel and four stormtroopers of the 501st), the shady Ambassador Jinzler (an impersonator who joined at the last minute), and the overly grateful Geroons (who were supposedly released from slavery to the vicious Vagaari when Thrawn attacked Outbound Flight) all seem to be hiding something. They find the remains and are surprised to discover that there is a colony of survivors living within the wreckage...and they don't like Jedi.

A lot of pages are devoted to the various groups trying to deal with the colonists and the traps they've set. The ultimate surprise, however, comes when the Geroons are revealed to be the Vagaari, intent on taking Outbound Flight for their own use. Luke and Mara save the day and peace is restored (more or less).

If you enjoyed the Bantam-era books where the characters go on adventures and return without really changing anything in the grand scale of things, you'll probably enjoy this story. If you preferred the galaxy-changing events in series like the "New Jedi Order" and "Legacy of the Force," then this might not be for you. I'm rather neutral on the issue, personally, so the lack of greatly impacting events wasn't particularly bothersome.

The plot is built a lot on being suspicious of all of the other characters. As I summed up above, everyone is hiding something from everyone else, so a good deal of the novel is devoted to figuring out who is hiding what exactly. I feel like the book could have been condensed a bit, but there were some interesting twists here and there. Zahn is a competent writer and can pull off a fairly intriguing plot. That being said, this was hardly his best work.

The concept of there being survivors living in the wreckage of Outbound Flight was very interesting. The tragedy of the crash is so built up within the novel that the discovery of a surviving colony is quite a welcome, unexpected surprise. I would have liked to know more about how they survived and what happened to them before they were found, but the exclusion of such information isn't that unsatisfying.

The twist of the Geroon being the Vagaari was also a big surprise. Zahn managed to keep their identities and motives very well hidden without giving anything away early on. I also appreciated that they were rather formidable, clever (to an extent) enemies instead of merely being unintelligent, violent aliens.

Zahn has put together a rather interesting cast of diverse characters (and there are a lot) that are all interesting to read about. They all have their own motives and backgrounds and, considering how many there are, are characterized pretty well. I initially found it difficult to keep track of all of the characters, but as I continued through the book, it stopped being an issue as the characters became more fleshed out.

Now onto the things I didn't care for in "Survivor's Quest." Many of the things that I found to be less than satisfying or, in some cases, aggravating are things that are common in all of Zahn's "Star Wars" books.

There are a lot of Zahn-isms used. Characters always seem to be wincing, grimacing, quirked eyebrows, or commenting on things wryly. It wouldn't be distracting if such phrases only popped up once or twice, but they occur so frequently that it begins to detract from the story. Also, conversing characters have the tendency to say "Point" or "Agreed," which comes off as sounding stilted and artificial (especially when multiple characters do it).

Also, for whatever reason, Zahn seems to have ignored everything that has happened in the Galaxy Far Far Away until this point. I get that this is supposed to be a stand-alone novel, but I personally enjoy seeing references to other events (aside from those written by the same author) to tie the novel into the rest of the Star Wars series. Here, Zahn only writes about his characters and only refers to events that he wrote about or alluded to in earlier novels. This would have been acceptable if there weren't many other books out when he wrote "Survivor's Quest," but that isn't the case. If you enjoy all of Zahn's characters and events, this may not bug you, but I don't particularly care for all of Zahn's characters (particularly Mara) and would enjoy seeing his events connected to others. To me, it felt like the whole novel was Zahn's own characters and world with a conflict that revolves around his characters and events (specifically Thrawn and Outbound Flight) with Luke, Jedi, and a few references to the New/Old Republic. To some, this may be fine, but I found it to be a bit aggravating.

Moving back to the plot for a moment, a lot of time is spent trying to uncover everyone's secrets, but very few of them are actually important or even particularly interesting or surprising. While I enjoyed Jinzler's character, for example, I didn't quite see why he was keeping his big secret from everyone when it ended up not really being that important. In addition, everyone revealing their secrets tends to lose its impact when everyone has something to reveal.

Regarding the Outbound Flight's survivor's, it was never mentioned why they hated Jedi so much. Their hatred of Force users is a big part of the story and their colony's culture, but no reason for that hate is given. It's very distracting to read about these peoples' paranoia without having any sort of understanding about it. I'm rather surprised that Zahn didn't include something about this since it plays such a large role in the book.

As I mentioned above, I don't like Mara very much and never have. I won't harp on about that (as it's expected she'll play a big role in Zahn's books, regardless of how much I dislike the character); I will, however, complain about the development of her relationship with Luke. I've never felt like their relationship was believable, and I'm still not convinced of it. "Survivor's Quest" was supposed to develop it more, and it failed to do that. Instead of showing us how much they love one another or how deep their bond is, Zahn tells us (usually through Luke thinking about Mara's red gold hair or green eyes). While I appreciated not having to read too much romance (as I'm not a fan of it in general), I would have liked to see why these two are so compatible and how their bond has grown; I was disappointed.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment is that, despite the events that happen, no one gets anywhere. As I mentioned above, books that don't have galaxy-impacting events don't bother me in the slightest. However, the characters didn't seem to accomplish anything in the long run, either. Luke, for example, hopes that Outbound Flight will give him some insights on the Old Jedi Order. This motivation seems to be forgotten by the author once they get to the wreckage. It seems like the events are supposed to be big to the characters involved, but they rarely are. Luke and Mara effortlessly save the day and everyone seems to be largely unaffected by anything in the long run. It almost feels like a wasted effort (especially having read the books that come after this and knowing that nothing big is done with the events here).

All in all, "Survivor's Quest" was ultimately disappointing. It has its strong points, such as a couple of the twists and the Outbound Flight's survivors. The characters are diverse and, for the most part, well developed. However, Zahn's writing tendencies greatly detract from the book's enjoyment (in terms of his phrases and the fact that he only uses his characters and events and ignores everything else), and the relationship between Luke and Mara doesn't feel any more developed than it was before the novel. Ultimately, the characters get nowhere. The good things are simply overshadowed by the bad. The story itself gets three stars, but the distracting writing, loose ends, and other unsatisfying developments (or lack thereof) knock the score to two stars.

This review is also posted on Amazon.com.

Ron: might be no longer a 4 on an absolute scale, yet definitely that in comparison to many different SW books. Zahn very easily weaves jointly threads from lots of his past books with sufficient outdated SW lore to maintain the (SW) universe together.

Eric Farr: i feel i might get pleasure from absolutely anything that Timothy Zahn writes (probably a great indicator that I may still try out a few of his unique fiction, which i've got but to do). And Zahn manages, as always, to convincingly painting celebrity Wars characters from the movies and his personal prior works. yet this novel finally used to be an aspect adventure; the stakes, for megastar Wars, consider low, and Luke and Mara, regardless of being the vital characters, do not have a transparent arc here, along with Mara's short contemplation of becoming a member of an offshoot of the Empire. whereas the unconventional deals a classy set of politics and intersecting mysteries which are attribute of Zahn's earlier megastar Wars attempts, the plot mostly boils right down to a sequence of Die tough motion scenes (plus the Force) as our heroes struggle again opposed to a shock terrorist strike. While the catalyst at the back of the motion is the rediscovery of Outbound Flight, the colony send suitable to the backstories of

Thrawn and Jedi grasp C'baoth, only a few solutions are given. And whereas Luke hopes to discover solutions in regards to the outdated Jedi, specifically to assist combine his perspectives on marriage along with his figuring out of the previous ways, he unearths none. In lots of ways, this book's mysteries mostly serve to industry Zahn's later novel, *Outbound Flight*, which might keep on with *Survivor's Quest* to book by way of a number of years and tracked the unique excursion of the doomed vessel. In short, I loved studying this book, however it as a rule felt like fluff.

Markus: *Survivor's Quest* is one other relatively relaxing celebrity Wars publication through Timothy Zahn. It does not particularly succeed in the extent of the Thrawn trilogy, yet I discovered it to be a lot better than the *Hand of Thrawn* duology. It comes with loads of significant alterations from what Zahn is used to, and it has one immense drawback and one titanic advantage. The previous is that each one the epic maneuvering and fast paced motion of the full-scale wars that Zahn regularly writes approximately is gone. The latter is that Zahn it appears determined he did not have to contain each one of many nice heroes from the movies; thus, this can be a novel approximately Luke and Mara alone. What I beloved so much approximately this booklet was once that it felt like an Agatha Christie novel within the celebrity Wars universe. Loads of various everyone is collected aboard a boat certain for a fifty-year-old crash site. Mysteries encompass each of them, they usually all preserve secrets and techniques from the others. Then issues commence happening: the send will get sabotaged, a passenger is shot and every little thing will get a bit extra interesting than someone had anticipated. And therefore starts a quest for Luke and Mara of uncovering the mysteries of the previous and the current both.

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